

IPPB'S WHATSAPP SERVICES

To empower customers pan-India to access banking services on their mobile phones in just a few clicks, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), in collaboration with Airtel, announced the launch of WhatsApp Banking Services for IPPB customers in New Delhi today, enabling them to access banking services on their mobile phone. Delivered on Airtel IQ, the messaging solution will augment the Govt.'s Digital India mission by enabling IPPB customers across the country to seamlessly connect with their bank on WhatsApp. The newly launched IPPB WhatsApp Banking channel will enable IPPB customers to seamlessly connect with the bank on WhatsApp and effortlessly avail a host of banking services, including doorstep service request, locating nearest Post Office and much more. In line with the ambition of the Government to bring digital and financial inclusion to citizens in their language, the Airtel - IPPB WhatsApp Banking solution is also working on to build multi-language support, enabling added convenience to customers, especially to those in the rural parts of the country to access banking services in their preferred language. Airtel has been working with IPPB to deliver as many as 250 million messages per month to the bank's customers many of whom are located in mofussil towns and tier 2,3 cities. The addition of the WhatsApp messaging will add to customer's accessibility to connect with the bank on their fingertips, furthering Digital India mission of the Government, as part of which IPPB has been working tirelessly to deliver banking services in the rural pockets of the country.

Gursharan Rai Bansal, CGM & CSMO - India Post Payments Bank said, "We are delighted to work with Bharti Airtel as our partner in driving digital and financial inclusion in India. We believe that financial services driven by technology have great potential and can go a long way in ensuring that the best financial products reach the farthest corners of the country."

Abhishek Biswal, Business Head - Airtel IQ said, "Airtel IQ is a robust, intuitive and secure cloud communication suite. With the addition of WhatsApp messaging to the existing SMS and voice communication that we offer to India Post Payments Bank customers, we will further enable a two-way communication between the bank and their customers. We are delighted to continue our association with IPPB to contribute significantly in making banking services more accessible to tier2,3 cities in the country. We promise to continue delivering customer centric solutions that offer greater convenience to customers." The IPPB and Airtel IQ are working towards further integrating a LIVE interactive customer support agent into the WhatsApp solution which will enable customers to access 24X7 support and get quick resolutions for their queries.

Growing Rewards Market

■ PRIYANKA SAURABH

Both givers and takers have a role to play in the growing rewards market. Givers will automatically end if there are no takers. If we have to pay money for any prize, then understand that we have not bought the prize. The matter is as simple as this. Then why should we go further? Through NGO registration, they collect funds in several stages or take push donations. Institutions have become related to each other. Engaged in honoring each other and covering the shawl. Government awards should be called monkey distribution or Lathi ka Dum. The greater the recognition, the bigger the medal. These testimonies call into question the authenticity of "For Sale" award winners. Nowadays social media platforms are full of such posts in which it is written that the above has got this award (gold). On receiving this award, both the recipient and the giver of the award start promoting themselves vigorously. The reality of these awards which are in headlines every day is highly condemnable and most of these awards (not all) are bought with money. It so happens that today there is a flood of non-governmental organizations in our country, which receive money from the government in the name of social service. Many of these NGOs contact people working in society or associated with any field. Tempt him that your service is worthy of praise. And our NGO will honor them. This process which started with online registration is the first step of loot instead of the prize by the said NGO when a person is charged for prize registration. The desire to get an award from any NGO or institution now traps the said person in its fascination and step by step the way of loot is opened. First, the registration fee, then the district-level winner, and then the state-level awardee, and finally the process ends with the cost of lodging and boarding at the national level.

Lost in the race for prizes, Forgot the true creation. They make false earnings. Tilak should be applied on the forehead, And even if you want a necklace around your neck. These writers became big. This is a matter of the purchased prizes. Now let's talk about the agreement organizations. Today many organizations are working in the literary world. When I see the working style of these institutions or read any report related to their functions, only one truth comes to the fore. And that is the truth that organizations of a particular field or the same ideology are moving forward by making agreements with each other. This agreement is such that you will honor us and we will honor you. And this series is going on continuously, it collects headlines in newspapers and social media. Especially they share such news among themselves. The common reader has nothing much to do with it. Now let's talk about government institutions and awards. His truth is not hidden from anyone. The stronger the stick, the bigger the medal. Don't know who will get this award after passing through the crossroads of recommendations. No applicant would have known. Their monkey distribution is already well known. After all, I have questioned the credibility of the award. Because recently I have been contacted by some people who have won these awards and they are making serious allegations about the credibility of such awards. Someone even said that in the last phase of the prize distribution ceremony, the applicant had to advertise by buying expensive stalls. The more money you spend, the bigger the prize.

Now he has gone to the edge, True hardworking creator: The color of politics These contractors of literature. Sell pens for pennies, How literary salvation. These writers became big. The biggest thing is that whatever fee is deposited step by step in the exploits of such NGOs. The closer he gets to the shining trophy, whoever missed a step or didn't pay the fee is out of the running for the prize. Now tell whether such a trophy or prize should be bought or not. Some were honored only after depositing the donation amount. while one bought the stall and received the Silver Award or the Scotch Order of Merit. These testimonies call into question the authenticity of "For Sale" award winners. Both the giver and the taker have a role to play in the growing market for such rewards. Those who give will automatically end. If you don't become a taker. If we have to pay money for any prize, then understand that we have not bought the prize. The matter is as simple as this. Then why should we go further? Through NGO registration, they collect funds in several stages or take push donations. Institutions have become related to each other. Engaged in honoring each other and covering the shawl. Government awards should be called monkey distribution or lathi ka dum. The greater the recognition, the bigger the medal. These testimonies call into question the authenticity of 'For Sale' award winners. Necessary with the worship of gods, Pure worship of the mind, without tasting the pain. There would have been no flourishing meditation. No literature without meditation, That creator is a liar. These writers became big.

I was a disadvantaged child from a non-educated family, yet I had the advantage of being in the company of great teachers. -A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

World Autism Awareness Day

■ DR ADITI BAKSHI

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously declared April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of those affected with autism and to recognize their rights so that they could lead a full filling and meaningful life as an integral part of society.

The Word autism is derived from the word "Auto" which means children are locked within themselves. Word Autism was first used by a psychiatrist Leo camer in 1943 who described it as "Early Infantile autism" Today it is considered to be a severe form of a broader group of disorders referred to as pervasive developmental disorders. ASD has been the focus of debate in recent years largely as a result of multinational reports of increase in its prevalence from past 40 years, which can be attributed to greater public awareness.

What it means to be on Autism spectrum? Autism spectrum disorder is a neuro development disorder characterized by impairment in several areas of development (apparent before age of 3 years) typically verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction, sensory experience, affected individuals exhibit repetitive and stereotypic movements/actions, difficulties in adapting to changes, lack of imaginative play, display anger tantrums and characteristics that appear in wide variety of combinations ranging from mild to severe hence referred it is referred to as 'Spectrum'.

Early signs of autism

- ▶ Avoids eye contact
- ▶ No response to name by 9 months
- ▶ Does not show different facial expressions by 9 months.
- ▶ No interactive play by 12months.
- ▶ No pointing by 18 months.
- ▶ Does not show interest in joining other children in play by 36 months. No pretend play by 48 months of age
- ▶ Lines up toys
- ▶ Obsessive interest. Fixity to routines
- ▶ Gets upset by minor changes
- ▶ Rocks body, flap hands, spins in circles, self hitting {in anger or excitement}

Not all or any of these symptoms may be present in same individual or affected individual. Some symptoms show up within 12 months of life while others make take 24 months to show up when they stop gaining new skills or loose previously acquired skills (termed as regression) also some people without ASD might also have some of these symptoms.

At what age can ASD be diagnosed? ASD can sometimes be detected at 18 months or younger by 2 years of age, a diagnosis by experienced professional can be considered reliable. However, many children don't receive a final diagnosis until they are much older. A definitive diagnosis may generally be delayed for upto 5 years of age, as by this age, with early intervention, many children show significant improvements in signs and symptoms to be able to join a normal/inclusive school alongside their neurotypical counterparts

What causes autism? Autism has no single identified cause however there is a strong evidence to suggest Genetic and Environmental factors (post natal neurological infections and fragile X syndrome etc.) being primarily responsible. Some Explanations like bad parenting, post natal maternal depression, bipolar disease, non affectionate/careless, overprotective parents and so on have largely been dismissed as Myths owing to lack of proven scientific evidence/Research.

Risk factors

- ▶ Having siblings with asd
- ▶ Certain genetic or chromosomal conditions e.g. fragile x syndrome, tuberous sclerosis.
- ▶ Parents with older age
- ▶ Experiencing complications at birth

■ DR RAMESH CHAND

Forestry is part of agriculture and allied sectors which comprise four segments namely, crops, livestock, fishery and forestry. Out of these, first three segments have witnessed sort of revolution like green revolution, white revolution, and blue revolution etc. This resulted in more than 3.05 per cent annual growth in their output during in the last 50 years. However, output of forestry increased by mere 0.54 per year which is not even one third of growth rate in population. This has very serious economic and ecological implications. Per capita availability of wood and wood products produced in the country followed a steep decline and India had to meet large part of domestic demand for wood and products from imports. Insignificant growth in forestry also mean little growth in environment and ecology friendly production. This has far reaching implications for carbon sequestration, water balance and health of natural eco system. Output of forestry comes from three sources viz. public forest, privately owned land and other land types owned by Centre and states, panchayats, communities etc. Due to various reasons extraction of wood and wood based products and setting up of wood based industry is strictly regulated by Forest Conservation Acts and various regulations. The total land area under forest in India is 23.4 million hectare. There is rationale toban or check commercial extraction of forest produce especially wood and wood products in such areas. However, there is huge possibility of raising forestry and trees outside this forest area to meet goals related to economic growth, environment, ecology and sustainability. The biggest scope is on agricultural land by adopting agro forestry. Out of total cultivable land, 26 million

In India autism affects 1 in 500 children. ASD affects one and a half million population world over. It is 4 times more prevalent in boys than girls with no known racial, ethnic & social boundaries.

Characteristic Features:

- 1) Language and Communication problems:
 - ▶ Delayed Speech: only 50 per cent autistics eventually develop useful speech,
 - ▶ Lack of communicative intent,
 - ▶ Parrot like involuntary speech (words or phrases)referred to as Echolalia,
 - ▶ Use of Repetitive words/phrases/sounds/babbling that are out of context, may or may not carry any meaning.
- 2) Difficulty in Social Interaction includes difficulty in social reciprocity, establishing peer relationships, showing affection, poor eye contact.
- 3) Behavior problems, repetitive behaviors and mannerisms (flapping hands, rocking body, spinning self in circles) obsessions, ties, self injurious behaviors, Aggressive behaviors, impulsivity, hyperactivity.

4) Issues with Sensory Integration and bodily movements: over or under sensitivity to sensory stimuli, abnormal posture and bodily movements leading to unusual reactions to sensory stimuli like touch, feel, see, hear, smell.

5) Intellectual functioning Impacted: ASD occurs in children at all levels of intellectual development from gifted ones to those that exhibit low IQ's with Mental Retardation. Majority individuals with autism are identified as having mental retardation of nearly 75 per cent (exhibiting an IQ below 70 on standard tests), difficulty focusing on tasks, problem paying attention, learning disability.

6) Unusual Emotional Reactions: Unusual mood, emotional reaction, anxiety, stress, excessive worry, unaware of danger, lack of fear or more fear.

7) Resistance to change, preference for sameness &predictability: predictable routines and environment are preferred by autistics (even slightest change in routine can be stress full may lead to socially inappropriate behaviors, meltdowns etc) symmetry is often important (line up toys, everything should be in order)

ASD and associated co morbidities

▶ A notable feature of ASD is that 2 children with a same diagnosis of Autism may exhibit different symptoms.

▶ It has also been noted that characteristic features of ASD may accompany other peadiatric disorders as well, such as fragile X syndrome or tuberous sclerosis. In order to Achieve correct diagnosis it is essential to differentiate ASD from other pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) like Asperger's syndrome in which child exhibits restricted interest, behaviors, impaired social interaction but no clinically significant general delay in language with average or above average intelligence. Pervasive development and disorders not otherwise specified (PDD) where child does not meet the criteria for specific diagnosis but there is severe and pervasive impairment in specified behaviours. Rett's disorder which to date is only known to occur in girls where in there is period of normal development followed by loss of previously acquired skills and emergence of repetitive hand movements beginning spontaneously at the age of 1 to 4 years. Childhood Disintegrated Disorder where in the child exhibits normal development for first 2 years followed by significant loss of previously acquired skills ASD must also be differentiated from ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder) another childhood disorder which present signs similar to ASD (characterized by: hyperactivity, difficulty focusing/paying attention hence avoidance, impulsivity, hard time communicating} and may occur independently or in association with ASD but has a different treatment approach.

There is no known cure for autism. Children are either born with the disorder or with a potential to develop the ASD symptoms. It does not mean that nothing can be done to help the child with autism. Early diagnosis and Early intervention lead to significantly improved long term outcomes.

How is autism diagnosed? There are no definitive medical tests. Medical examination does helps to rule out other problems unrelated to autism for example, Hearing impairment, lead poisoning, development or behavior disorders, mental retardation, eccentric habits. The diagnosis is usually carried out by a team comprising of psychologist, neurologist, Development pediatrician, Speech and language therapist, Occupational therapist and others. The team uses observation, interviews, specific checklist/screening tool developed for autism screening purpose.

What is early intervention and its importance. Early intervention (EI) is defined as the services delivered to children in infancy to about the age of 6 years. Research shows that EI makes a dramatic impact on reducing the symptoms of autism as young brains are most flexible. It begins with knowing and observing the development milestones and tailoring a comprehensive treatment program for the child. Several treatment approaches are being used to cater to different difficulties and conditions associated with spectrum and sometimes a combination of different treatment approaches may be planned for improved results.

Focus on changing behaviors by understanding what happens before and after the behaviour includes: Applied behavior analysis (ABA) based upon Reinforcing positive behaviours and gradually decreasing negative or unacceptable behaviours

Discrete Trial Training (step by step instructions to teach desired behaviour) and Pivotal Response Training (takes place in natural setting rather than clinical setting)

▶ Another approach is known as Floortime involves social and emotional skills

▶ The TEACCH program: uses picture cards and other visual cues

▶ Play Therapy (learning via play, child directed methodology)

▶ Other behavioural approaches: Modeling, video modeling, peer mediated intervention, social stories, behavior momentum {increases motivation when a challenging task is required}

Developmental Approaches includes

a)Occupational therapy involves teaching skills for independent living for instance dressing bathing eating relating to people. Includes :

▶ Sensory Integration Therapy improves response to both restrictive and overwhelming sensory input

▶ Physical Therapy improves physical skills

▶ Brain Gym Exercises includes specific exercises to activate certain specific areas of brain and hence improve the overall all results generated with occupational therapy

b) Speech and language therapy helps improve understanding and use of speech language and overall communication. School Readiness Program includes facilitated peer interaction, Group therapy program.

Others therapies in use Art therapy, Music therapy, Dance therapy, yoga therapy, primitive reflex therapy, Reiki healing, play therapy, Neurolinguistic planning (NLP), RDI and so on.

Earlier the child receive early intervention (EI) more likely will it be possible for them to reach their full potential How much therapy is sufficient to see notable results? 20 to 40 hours a week is ideal.

Usefulness of Pharmacotherapy /Medications for autism: A huge variety of medications have been used to treat

autism, to be prescribed only by a registered/ licenced medical practitioner. Includes Antipsychotics, Anti-depressants, amphetamines, psychedelics and megavitamins. some commonly used medicines:

▶ Fenfluramine helps in decreasing behavior symptoms, helpful in increasing IQ

▶ Haloperidol decreases hyperactivity and abnormal behavioral symptoms

▶ Antiepileptic medications almost 33 per cent autistic patients develop epilepsy and require antiepileptic medications

▶ Melatonin, sizodon for patients with Sleep problems

Notably very few medications have shown any promising results and none of the medicines can cure Autism. Medicines do help alleviate some medical symptoms of associated co-morbid conditions that accompany ASD.

Medical issues that commonly accompany autism:

▶ ASD is often accompanied with gastrointestinal disorders (like Constipation and diarrhea, children are often gassy and bloated), other issues are sleep disorders, epilepsy, seizures, eating disorders (difficulty eating diverse food types leading to underweight and malnutrition and weakness) hypotonia etc. Do special diets help? Is there a connection between child's behavior and certain foods? There is no scientific evidence to prove a connection between nutrition and ASD. To some extent diet influences everyone's behavior but it is not yet clear that diet influences behavior of children affected with ASD differently from others. To be on a safer side one can get test done for food sensitivities. According to an independent study diet makes a difference only to a relatively small number of children. One also has to decide if the whole family can follow this new diet. Internet is full of varied, unusual and often misleading treatments for autism offered to desperate parents. Parents must therefore make an informed and wise decision to not fall prey to harmful treatments.

Treatment depends on individual (treatment is usually tailor made according to specific individual needs). In most cases a combination of treatment methods is more effective. Autism usually requires lifelong intervention and treatment. Scientists are searching or methods of treatment but the real question is what aspect of autism can be cured? You love your child more than anything in this world in the early days of your child's life, long before any diagnosis is made there are hundreds hopes, dreams and plans you have for your child but when the child is diagnosed with an Autism spectrum disorder you may experience many doors are suddenly closed because this diagnosis often accompanied by a long list of dire predictions like the child will never talk, have friends, job or marriage. Avoid getting defensive, instead turn for help. Clinical inputs can help ensure smoother acceptance into society by working on difficulties, skills and behaviors. Parents have to be realistic about their expectations of normalcy in behaviours and independent living on long term basis, while working with their wards. It is important to focus on gains made with intervention, being open and honest about the child and be ready with answers if people around question you. It is crucial that you understand that you don't have to accept the limits placed on your child, your child has capacity for learning, communicating, experiencing real happiness and developing warm loving and satisfying relationships. There is no better way of celebrating World Autism awareness day (WAAD) than by working on ways to increase our own understanding of not only Autism spectrum disorder features but also how it impacts lives of affected individuals & their families, thereby promoting kindness and inclusivity in society and world at large.

(The author is BDS, Post-Graduate Diploma holder in Special Education).

Liberalization of Forest Conservation Act & Regulations

■ DR RAMESH CHAND

Forestry is part of agriculture and allied sectors which comprise four segments namely, crops, livestock, fishery and forestry. Out of these, first three segments have witnessed sort of revolution like green revolution, white revolution, and blue revolution etc. This resulted in more than 3.05 per cent annual growth in their output during in the last 50 years. However, output of forestry increased by mere 0.54 per year which is not even one third of growth rate in population. This has very serious economic and ecological implications. Per capita availability of wood and wood products produced in the country followed a steep decline and India had to meet large part of domestic demand for wood and products from imports. Insignificant growth in forestry also mean little growth in environment and ecology friendly production. This has far reaching implications for carbon sequestration, water balance and health of natural eco system. Output of forestry comes from three sources viz. public forest, privately owned land and other land types owned by Centre and states, panchayats, communities etc. Due to various reasons extraction of wood and wood based products and setting up of wood based industry is strictly regulated by Forest Conservation Acts and various regulations. The total land area under forest in India is 23.4 million hectare. There is rationale toban or check commercial extraction of forest produce especially wood and wood products in such areas. However, there is huge possibility of raising forestry and trees outside this forest area to meet goals related to economic growth, environment, ecology and sustainability. The biggest scope is on agricultural land by adopting agro forestry. Out of total cultivable land, 26 million

hectare remains fallow. This is more than total area under forests in the country. India also has 12 million hectare of culturable waste lands. There are huge possibilities of raising trees on fallow land, culturable waste and on field boundaries. At present, forestry plantations on private non forest land covers very small area and most of tree species grow only naturally. They are not sufficient to meet domestic demand for wood. As a result India has been importing large quantity of wood and wood products which has shown rising trend till 2018-19 when imports reached \$6126 million or Rs. 42841 crore. The reasons for very low interest in tree plantations and agro-forestry needs closer examination. There is no demand side constraint as the prices and import of wood and wood based products follow rising trend in the country. Till a few years back there were strict restrictions on felling of trees grown on non forest private land and their inter-state movement required Transit permit. This even discouraged naturally growing trees on private lands as landowners had to follow cumbersome procedures to get permission for selling such trees. In the meantime country came with National Forest Policy 1988 and National Agro-forestry Policy 2014 to encourage tree plantation in the country. In the wake of all this MoEFCC issued fresh guidelines to States and UTs for "Felling and Transit Regulations for Tree Species Grown on Non Forest Private Lands" on 18 Nov. 2014. These guidelines clearly specified list of tree species exempted from any restrictions for felling and liberalised transit rules for tree species grown on private land. Subsequently, this matter was taken up by the NITI Aayog with States/UTs as a part of Reforms related to Agriculture and Allied Sectors. Some states issued their own noti-

fications to comply with the guidelines issued by the central government. However, the matter was not very actively followed in most of the states.

Even the limited follow up of liberalization of restrictions on felling and transit of trees raised on private land showed large impact on growth of output of forestry and reduction in import of wood and wood based products. A year after the notification on relaxation of restrictions on felling of Tree Species grown on Private Land, output of forestry sector show more than 5 per cent annual growth for three consecutive years. This never happened before (since 1950-51). Similarly, import of wood and wood based products declined by 5% in two years after 2014-15 and fluctuated thereafter rather than moving on rising trend. Field reports indicate that area under agro-forestry species, like poplar, has seen large increase in some pockets in the country. However, the information about removal of restrictions on felling of trees has not percolated down in large parts of the country. There is a need to take this information to village level. There is also a need for complete liberalization of felling and free transport of tree material in the country to encourage greening of India. In the present day of technology there are ways to ascertain source of supply i.e., whether the produce is from forest land or private land. Technological options are now available for faster and better quality production of various tree species. However, due to various kind of regulatory restrictions markets for tree species remain highly underdeveloped. If these constraints are removed, forestry sector has the potential for "brown revolution" like other three sub sectors of agriculture and allied sectors.

(The author is Member, NITI Aayog).